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ABSTRACT

Research suggests that assimilative motivation is largely responsible for the development of native-like speech in both first and second languages. Analysis of anecdotal evidence of early bilingual development, studies of dialect acquisition, bilingual immersion programs, and studies of language pidginization illustrating the development of assimilative motivation in children shows that this motivation begins to decrease in adolescence in most speakers. This does not assume that learners must be assimilatively motivated in order to develop a high second language proficiency level, because many learners who are instrumentally motivated develop enough second language facility to satisfy communicative language function requirements. However, without assimilative motivation, these learners are not likely to acquire all the characteristics of native-like speech. If the effects of assimilative motivation are to be understood thoroughly, actual observational studies must be performed on subjects of varying ages placed in diverse second language environments. Only through direct observation of individuals immersed for extended periods of time can the quality and quantity of interaction between second language learners and second language community members be measured. (MSE)

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# BEYOND INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION: THE DEVELOPMENT AND INFLUENCE OF ASSIMILATIVE MOTIVATION

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Language is much more than a tool for communicating or a means of organizing our thoughts and classifying objects in the world around us; it is one of the most powerful means available of identifying ourselves as a member of a particular social group. When we speak we "betray our social group membership, sometimes by design and sometimes whether we wish to or not" (Brown and Levinson 1979:300).

Smith (1972) has referred to this aspect of language as the integrative function. It is distinguished from the communicative function which he identifies with the transmission of referential or denotative information between persons. He notes that a speaker of a language can communicate referential meaning without many of the features which characterize native-like speech. For example, a speaker of English is rarely misunderstood if he fails to inflect the verb for third person singular. And yet such features are a very important part of native-like speech in most varieties of English.

Linguistic groups often exercise sanctions upon those speakers who fail to conform to the norms of the group. Lambert et al. (1960) have shown that both anglophones and francophones in Quebec utilize dialect as a primary marker for their negative stereotyping. Similar results have been found with other linguistic groups (Flores and Hooper 1975, Williams 1976). Labov (1972a:256) has claimed that among youngsters involved in neighborhood gangs in Harlem ". . . the group exerts its control over the vernacular in a supervision so close that a single slip may be condemned and remembered for years (1972a:256)."

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Joos (1971) has hypothesized that it is precisely the absence of this integrative motive in a speech community which gives rise to a pidgin language. When speakers of different languages need to interact but lack the social solidarity to form a homogeneous community, they may do so by inventing an interlanguage which lacks many of the grammatical and phonological features that would serve to identify them as native speakers of either of the languages.

This integrative motive discussed by Joos, Labov and others should not be confused with that commonly discussed in the literature on language learning (Gardner and Lambert 1972, Spolsky 1969).[1] In order to avoid confusion I will refer to it as assimilative motivation.[2] Assimilative motivation differs from the integrative motivation discussed by Gardner and Lambert in several fundamental ways.

First of all, integrative motivation appears not to necessitate first-hand experience with a peer group of the target culture. Gardner and Lambert attempt to measure subjects' desire to communicate with or be like members of another linguistic group, based not on first-hand experience with the culture, but on an "open-minded, friendly and inquisitive" interest in the culture or on "dissatisfactions experienced in their own culture" (1972:3). Thus, this kind of orientation could be experienced by persons who have had no direct experience with a peer group in the target culture.

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[1]Schumann (1978a) has noted a similar difference in his Acculturation Model, although he appears to consider it simply a matter of degree. He identifies two types of acculturation one of which roughly corresponds to the term assimilative motivation as it is discussed in this paper. He states that:

> ...in type one acculturation, the learner is socially integrated with the TL group and, as a result, develops sufficient contacts with TL speakers to enable him to acquire the TL. In addition, he is psychologically open to the TL such that input to which he is exposed becomes intake. Type two acculturation has all the characteristics of type one, but in this case the learner regards the TL speakers as a reference group whose life style and values he consciously or unconsciously desires to adopt (Schumann 1978a:29).

Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:50, 51) have also made a similar distinction. They refer to integrative motivation and to social group identification motivation. Social group identification motivation is defined as "...the desire to acquire proficiency in a language or language variety spoken by a social group with which the learner identifies" (1982:50-51). They further state that:

> The social group identification motive is similar to the integrative motive, but...goes beyond it. Learners with an integrative motive for learning a new language would wish to participate in the social or cultural life of the target language speakers while retaining their identification with their own native language group. Learners who have social group identification motive would want social and cultural participation, but they would also want to become members of the group that speaks the new language or language variety (1982:1)

[2]The term assimilative motivation was suggested by Cheryl Brown and has been chosen because it implies that the learner desires to become an indistinquishable member of the target speech community. The learner may not be able necessarily to articulate his feelings regarding the social group, but he will manifest his attitude toward the group through his conforming to the norms of the group.

Assimilative motivation, on the other hand, occurs only after the individual has experienced prolonged contact with the target culture. As a matter of fact, the initial reaction of many persons when placed in a second language environment may be one of rejecting the new language and culture (Kenyeres and Kenyeres 1938, Itoh and Hatch 1978). After a period of contact with peers from the target culture, however, children usually adapt and attempt to gain the acceptance of the group.

Secondly, the Gardner and Lambert-type of questionnaires require the subject to make overt, reasoned choices regarding alternative motivations for studying a second language. The assimilative motive discussed here is a more subtle force which often operates in spite of the fact that the subject might not understand it nor be able to discuss it rationally.

Finally, the indirect questionnaire of Spolsky (1969) and the "attitudinal ratings" of Gardner and Lambert (1972), while they do measure a rather intuitive kind of force in the subjects, appear to measure factors which disrupt normal assimilative motivation rather than the motivation itself. These disruptive forces will be discussed in greater detail later.

Assimilative motivation, which is the subject of this paper, appears to be: (1) an essential part of normal language acquisition and, like the capacity for language acquisition itself, a consequence of species membership, (2) largely a peer-group phenomenon, (3) the primary impetus for developing native-like speech in a second language, (4) strongest during infancy and childhood, gradually becoming weaker through adolescence and into adulthood, and (5) capable of being disrupted even during childhood by certain external social forces.

## Assimilative Motivation and Language Acquisition

In normal first language acquisition it appears clear that children do not acquire forms primarily because they are overtly rewarded for it (Brown and Hanlon 1970). Caretakers have not been shown to withhold affection nor physical rewards from children because of their defective syntax or pronunciation. Children perform most language functions quite well at an early age with rather imperfect grammar.

Why, then, should children go to all the trouble of becoming native speakers of the language of their environment? If they can understand and make themselves understood rather well with forms which deviate from the normal adult standard, why should they continue to develop their language until it is virtually indistinguishable from that of other members of their speech community? While this problem seems not to have received much attention in the literature, it appears that the assimilative function of language plays a large role in this development. The child must develop native-like speech in order to become an accepted member of his peer social group (Labov 1972a).

## The Ontogeny of Assimilative Motivation as a Peer-Group Phenomenon

During the last decade a considerable literature has developed regarding the origins and development of children's behaviors toward others. This literature suggests that children are capable of distinguishing between people in their en-

vironment from a very early age. Fogel (1979) observed that infants between the ages of 5 and 14 weeks responded differently to their mothers than to other infants. When their mothers were present they were likely to smile, gesture, raise their eyebrows, and stick out their tongues; but while in the presence of other infants they would strain forward and stare as if "to get a closer look." During their second looks at other infants they were likely to exhibit abrupt head and arm movements, which Fogel said had "the quality of almost uncontrolled excitement" (1979:220, 224). Likewise Eckerman and Stein found that ". . . even from very early life, the frequency with which the infant looks, smiles, and babbles to people varies with the person" (1982:43). Bronson (1975) observed that infants were capable of recognizing strangers by three months of age. Brooks and Lewis (1976) found that by the age of nine months children could differentiate between midgets, adults and other children.

What is more, children begin at a very early age to demonstrate preferences for people like themselves (Berscheid and Walster 1978, Doyle 1982, Hay, Pederson and Nash 1982). Brooks and Lewis (1976) observed that twelve-month-old infants preferred to look at baby faces rather than adult faces. Vandell (1980) in a longitudinal study of infants between 6 and 12 months of age found that infants looked at and vocalized more to peers than to their mothers. Others have shown that toddlers and young children manifest a preference for playmates of the same sex (Langlois et al. 1973, Abel and Sahinkaya 1962, Jacklin and Maccoby 1978, Serbin, Tonick and Sterngianz 1977), and of the same race (Lambert and Taguchi 1956, McCandless and Hoyt 1961). Brooks-Gunn and Lewis hypothesized that this preference develops as the child begins to develop perceptions of self:

> As the child develops a notion of self, he also comes to value himself. By inference, those who are like self are also valued. Thus, preferences arise out of the valuation of self and the knowledge that self and a specific other both possess similar properties, i.e. gender, age, or perhaps even a specific affective relationship (i.e. parent and infant, brother and sister, etc.) (1978:97)

With regard to language this preference for persons like themselves is manifested in children in the particular speech varieties which they acquire. A number of linguists have noted that when families move to a new dialect area, the children typically learn the dialect of their peers rather than that of their parents (Stewart 1964, Labov 1966). Mexican children immigrating to black neighborhoods in Los Angeles have been observed to acquire the black dialect of their peers rather than the standard English dialect of their teachers. Maori children acquire the English dialect of their own ethnic group rather than the standard New Zealand dialect of other children in their environment (Benton 1974:93).

Not only do children manifest this preference for peer-group speech in the acquisition of dialects, but also studies of early bilingual development suggest that children experience a similar peer influence on the development of two languages. Kenyeres and Kenyeres (1938) report a diary study of their seven-year-old daughter Eva's acquisition of French. Eva was raised as a monolingual in Hungarian, and at the age of seven moved with her family to Geneva. At first she refused to learn French, but as time went on she developed friendships with her peers

and within six months of her arrival in Geneva, Eva no longer wished to respond in Hungarian to her parents even when they addressed her in that language. Upon returning to Budapest after two years in Geneva, Eva was laughed at because of her faulty Hungarian, and she went through a readjustment period in Hungarian. Within a few months she was embarrassed to speak French with her parents unless no one else was around.

Tits (1948) reports a study of a Spanish refugee girl who lived with a Belgian family. When she was 6:4 she attended school where her peers spoke French. She advanced very rapidly in learning French and within months claimed that she could no longer speak Spanish. This happened in spite of attempts on the part of her foster family to preserve her Spanish by speaking it at home.

Leopold (1954:26, 27), in a study of the bilingual German-English development of his daughter Hildegard in an English-speaking environment, observed that by the end of her second year, English began to dominate even though he spoke to her exclusively in German. During her third year, her English sentence patterns progressed with "astonishing rapidity" while her German syntax was "stagnant." By the end of her fourth year her language was decidedly English with occasional intrusions of German words. She began speaking English to her father even though he addressed her in German. At the end of her fifth year, the Leopolds moved to Germany for about seven months. For the first month Hildegard was left alone with German speakers. During that time she became "completely fluent" in German and her English receded. She was "unable to say more than a few very simple English sentences after these four weeks." By the end of six months, she had straightened out most of her problems with German pronunciation and syntax. Upon her return to the United States, the adjustment process was reversed. At first she was unable to say more than a few words in English, but within a few weeks she had regained her fluency.

In an experimental case study with his own son, James (1981) found that his two-year-old son was already choosing to speak English to the child's Hokkien-speaking mother who was his primary caretaker—in spite of the fact that the mother had never spoken to him in English. James hypothesized that this was the result of the fact that the child was in daily contact with English-speaking peers on the playground of the married student housing project where they lived.

Labov in a very careful study of dialect variation in the inner city found that "...the most consistent vernacular is spoken by those between the ages of 9 and 18....In some sharply differentiated subsystems, a consistent vernacular can be obtained only from children and adolescents: the grammars of adults seem to be permanently changed by their use of standard rules" (1972a:257). Elsewhere he has claimed that the local vernacular is acquired primarily between the ages of 5 through 12 from the immediate group of friends and associates. "Neighborhood dialect characteristics become automatically established responses in the pattern of everyday speech, and the influence of the parents is submerged under the influence of the peer group" (Labov 1974:91).

The importance of assimilative motive in language acquisition can be appreciated when one examines the course of second language acquisition in its absence. Schumann (1978a) documents a case of a 33-year-old Costa Rican immigrant, Alberto, whose English had essentially fossilized at a rather primitive stage of development. Schumann attributes this pidginization in large part to the lack of motivation of the subject, resulting from the great social distance between

the subject and the English-speaking community. While the effects of other factors cannot be totally discounted in Alberto's lack of progress in learning English, Schumann presents convincing evidence that the lack of motivation played a major role.

This fossilization of linguistic development is also characteristic of children when there is no peer group that speaks the second language natively (Selinker, Swain and Dumas 1975). In second language immersion programs, teachers are typically native speakers of the L2 while almost all the students begin the program with little or no L2 background. Thus the teacher serves as a native-speaker model for L2, but the peer group is composed essentially of speakers of L1. Spilka (1976) observed that while children in such programs develop a highly communicative and satisfactory level of linguistic ability in the second language, their speech is simplified in ways similar to that of adult second language learners. As a matter of fact, the assimilative motivation in some ways may work against the acquisition of native-like proficiency in the L2. Cohen observed that the interlanguage of the peer group "...can have such an impact that where there are several native speakers of the second language in the class, as in Culver City, they too may begin to use certain of these interlanguage forms" (1982:105).

What is being claimed here is that assimilative motivation is the normal inclination of children who are placed in a second language learning environment and that if there is no peer group available that represents the second language and culture, even children will not acquire native-like competency in the language.

## The Disruption of the Assimilative Motive

While a high level of assimilative motivation is normal for children, there are certain social influences that can disrupt it. Probably the most common disruptive influence is parental intervention. Labov, in his study of dialects among youth gangs in New York City, observed that "...even in the most solid working-class areas, there are many isolated children who grow up without being members of any vernacular peer group and a steadily increasing number of individuals split away from the vernacular culture in their adolescent years" (1972a:258). In the black vernacular these individuals are referred to as "lames." One of the principal reasons for these children not being a part of the peer group is that their parents will not allow them to associate with other gang members.

In addition to being a disruptive force in children's acquisition of a particular dialect, parental intervention can also disrupt the normal force of assimilative motivation in the development of early bilingualism. As was discussed earlier, the normal tendency in early bilingual development is for the child to begin preferring the language of peers to the exclusion of the language spoken by the parents. Unless parents do something to intervene, this may lead to the child's becoming monolingual. Saunders in a study of the English-German bilingual development of his two sons in Australia, states that if he "...had relented...and spoken English with Thomas (his son), he (Thomas) would have been quite happy to abandon German...," or if he had not persisted in "...eliciting German responses from him, Thomas would...be a receiving bilingual only, his knowledge of German confined to comprehension and his ability to speak the language limited" (1980:130).

Likewise, Fantini (1976) mentions that his wife was very strict in not respond-

ing to Mario when he spoke to her in English and insisted that Mario not mix the two languages. Consequently, Mario continued to speak Spanish at home even after he began attending preschool in English. It seems apparent from these two accounts that the maintenance of bilingual development in these two children required a special effort on the part of the parents to counteract the influence of the peer language.

Parental or community attitude toward a language or speech community can also have a very disruptive influence on assimilative motivation. Lambert and Klineberg (1967) have postulated that parents and other socializing agents train children through their interactions to notice certain differences among social groups and to manifest particular attitudes toward those differences. Aboud (1978) observed that in interactions between English- and French-speaking Canadians, it is usually the French speakers who concede to the dominant English speakers in terms of the language used.

Similar findings are reported by Edelsky and Hudelson (1981) in a study of Spanish-English interaction in a bilingual first grade class in Arizona. They were trying to answer the question of why English-speaking children in the Southwest, when placed in a class in which the majority of the children speak Spanish and where approximately half of the classroom instruction is carried out in Spanish, typically do not learn that language, while the Spanish-speaking children in the same environment learn to speak English fluently. During the nine-month period in which the investigators observed the children in both experimental sessions as well as in natural interaction "...Spanish was not used by any (Spanish speakers) on a one-to-one basis with any of the Anglo children" (Edelsky and Hudelson 1981:38). They concluded that this concession to the dominant English-speaking group on the part of the Spanish-speaking children was the result of major societal meanings assigned to the two languages.

Rosenthal (1974), in an ingenious series of experiments, found that societal attitudes toward language and cultures are internalized by children at an extremely early age. One of her experiments involving "magic boxes" attempted to test Black and Anglo preschool children's attitudes toward and preferences for Black and Standard English. Two boxes with identical faces painted on them were wired with a tape player on which identical language content was recorded in the two dialects. The children heard both dialects, each inviting them to take from that "person" a gift that was hidden from view. The children had to choose from which of the "persons" they preferred to receive the gift based soley on the dialect of the recording. Rosenthal found that children between the ages of three and five have already formed attitudes toward Black and Standard English and that these attitudes have many similarities to those found in adults. Similar results have been reported by Brand, Ruiz and Padilla (1974) for Spanish-speaking children.

There are other factors besides those mentioned above which disrupt the normal course of assimilative motivation in young people. Labov mentions that some individuals may not be allowed to participate in peer-group activities because of physical inabilities, or because they are considered by the group to be "mentally or morally defective" (1972a:259).

## The Effects of Age on Assimilative Motivation

It is apparent from the foregoing discussion that the assimilative motive is

a fundamental force in children's language development from a very early age, that it is primarily peer-centered, and that its normal influence can be disrupted by various social forces. Unlike adults who have successfully coped with the social environment for many years and who have developed a stable perception of themselves and their relationship to others, children seem compelled by a lack of development in these areas to pursue linguistic attachments, first with their parents, and then with peers. A number of authors have noted this need for social support by children and adolescents (e.g., Ervin-Tripp 1968, Horrocks 1962, Christophersen 1973).

It appears, however, that assimilative motivation begins to diminish during adolescence. Labov has noted that in most cities "...peer-group membership reaches a peak at the ages of 15 to 16" (1972a:257). This coincides with the age at which working class youngsters in New York begin to learn the more prestigious r-pronunciation (Labov 1972b:138). Labov observed that by 17 or 18 youngsters have attained "complete familiarity with the (linguistic) norms of the community" (1972b:138) and that, although they attempt to develop the use of more prestigious forms, they never attain the security in the use of these which the youngster from an upper-middle-class family does. He further states that "...it appears that this preadolscent period is the age when automatic patterns of motor production are set; as a rule, any habits acquired after this period are maintained by audio-monitoring, in addition to motor-controlled patterns" (1972b:138).

Additional support for the notion that assimilative motivation decreases with age during adolescence and adulthood comes from studies of the effects of age on language acquisition. Krashen, Long, and Scarcella reviewed over twenty recent studies on this topic and concluded that while adults and adolescents "...proceed through the early stages of syntactic and morphological development more rapidly than do children, acquirers who begin natural exposure to second language during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults" (1979:573).

While a number of alternative explanations have been proposed to account for the effects of age on language acquisition (Krashen 1982), the data from these studies are consistent with the hypothesis being advanced here. Asher and Garcia (1969), Selinger, Krashen, and Ladefoged (1975) and Oyama (1976, 1978) found that for immigrants living in second language environments, age of arrival was correlated inversely with nativeness of accent, listening comprehension and syntactic development. These results obtained, however, only after extended periods of residency in the L2 environment. In the Snow and Hoefnagel-Hohle (1978) study, in which they examined the acquisition of Dutch by monolingual English speakers living in Holland over a period of a year, adults and adolescents (aged 12-15) performed better than children (aged 3-10) on all measures of proficiency by the end of the first four-month period. After an additional four months the 8- to 10-year-olds had surpassed the adults on most measures. By the end of the year the 6- to 10-year-olds had not only surpassed the adults on most measures but they out-performed the 12- to 15-year-olds on measures of story comprehension and spontaneous speech fluency.

In studies where subjects were not exposed to a second language peer group, children were not superior to adolescents and adults in acquiring the L2, even when periods of exposure ranged over several years. Oller and Nagato (1974) compared the acquisition of English by Japanese subjects who began their lan-

guage study in grades 1-6 with that of students who began in grades 7, 8 and 9. By grade 11 there were no significant differences in proficiency.

An interesting case study supporting this notion of preadolescence as being the period during which children naturally acquire unmonitored native-like speech is Hinofotis' (1977) analysis of the English language development of two Greek immigrants, Mary (age 7) and Spyros (age 14). Hinofotis reports that "Mary's pronunciation of English at the end of the two years in the United States was that of a native speaker," (1977:6) while Spyros spoke English with a Greek accent. Unfortunately Hinofotis does not comment on the interaction of the two subjects with their English-speaking peer groups.

One additional bit of evidence in favor of the view being presented here regarding the effects of age on assimilative motivation comes from actual observations of subjects of different ages interacting in second language environments. Wong-Fillmore (1976) observed the interaction of five monolingual Spanish-speaking first graders in a bilingual classroom over a period of nine months. She analyzed the observational records and divided the children's development into stages based on the children's learning strategies. She observes that "the first stage is characterized by a general concern, not so much for communicating as for getting a handle on the language and establishing a social relationship with speakers of the language" (Wong-Fillmore 1976:659). During the second stage, the children were primarily concerned with communicating. "The goal (was) to get the point across, one way or another" (1976:662). Only during the third stage did the children become concerned with grammatical correctness.

Adults, on the other hand, seem to approach the task of learning a language in exactly the opposite order. In Browns' (1983) analysis of observational records and diary entries of older learners acquiring Spanish in both formal and informal environments, she observed that:

> the most noticeable difference between learners in the formal language environment and learners in the informal learning environment was in the focus of their attention. In the formal environment, the focus was directly on learning the language. This focus influenced the perception of all factors. This is evidenced by the number of times that the older learners mentioned such things as language activities, teachers, and materials.
>
> In the field, however, the focus of attention was completely different. Instead of language being viewed as the end, it was viewed as a tool to use to achieve other goals, a tool that learners felt was frequently the cause of a failure or success at doing something else (1983:220).

Thus the older learners were first concerned with learning the correct structure of the language, and secondly with the problem of communicating via the language and using it as a tool. There is no mention of their ever reaching a stage in which they were concerned about social acceptance.

Brown quotes from a conversation with one of the older learners in a predominantly Spanish-speaking area of South Texas which reveals a great deal about their socialization in the second language environment:

> We really flubbed a little and I'm sure that it was 99% our fault. She lived right above us, right here in this building. And we would go. . . periodically and visit her but we didn't visit her everyday like we should or as often as we should because of the language barrier. We'd go in and, you know, after we'd say 'Good morning' or 'Good afternoon' and 'Como esta?' and this you say a few pat phrases and you back out the door—and you haven't solved your problem. You haven't solved your problem at all (1983:220).

It is apparent from this brief monolog that the learner felt a certain amount of discomfort in being immersed in the L2 environment and that there is an aspect of avoidance in his interaction with his neighbor. Even after seven months of daily association with Spanish speakers, this learner's motivation appears still to be primarily instrumental.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have attempted to show that assimilative motivation is largely responsible for the development of native-like speech in both first and second language. I have traced the development of assimilative motivation in children and have attempted to show that during adolescence this type of motivation begins to decrease in most speakers. The evidence for these claims has come largely from anecdotal accounts of early bilingual development, studies of dialect acquisition, bilingual immersion programs, and studies of language pidginization.

It is not being claimed that learners must be assimilatively motivated in order to develop a high level of proficiency in a second language. Obviously many learners who are primarily instrumentally motivated develop a great deal of facility with second languages. This degree of facility may be sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the communicative function of language discussed by Smith (1972). However, such learners are not likely to acquire all of the characteristics of native-like speech without assimilative motivation.

If the effects of assimilative motivation are to be understood thoroughly, actual observational studies must be performed on subjects of varying ages placed in diverse second language environments. Only through direct observation of individuals immersed for extended periods of time in such environments can we hope to measure the quantity and quality of interaction between second language learners and members of the language community, thus gaining an appreciation for the intensity of their assimilative motivation.

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